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### **Testimony in Support of HB 5593**

#### **An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

Judiciary Committee  
March 31, 2014

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary committee. My name is Amy Ramirez and I am an MSW candidate currently studying at the University Of Connecticut. I am writing to you today in support of HB 5593, regarding Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. This is a step in the right direction for many people residing in the state of Connecticut, especially those who are victims of Domestic Violence. As you all may know, Domestic Violence is defined as physical, mental, verbal and emotional abuse of a person who is currently or formerly involved with an individual in a dating, married or family relationship. Each year, women experience about 4.8 million domestic assaults and rapes. Men are the victims of about 2.9 million domestic assaults. This affects everyone not just a specific population. Even family members with direct connection to the victim may be affected. An example of this was with a previous client I had personally worked with. Her former husband had physically and mentally abused her and was eventually sent to jail. She was an elderly woman taking care of her grandchild without receiving much help. She was in search of someone who would be able to help her in any way because she felt threatened living in her home she once shared with her abuser. She was terrified that one day he would be released and will come right back to continue the same patterns of abuse. She had a hard time maintaining both herself and her grandson in that home after the sudden change in family structure; she also worried on how she would be able to continue taking care for him. She was losing sight on any help or any support systems due to the strenuous levels of abuse she has gone through. It has even affected her financially as she felt she could no longer take care of her grandson. There has to be more support for these victims. This is one of many instances that occur here right in our State of Connecticut to our own residents. The system needs to be re-evaluated in order to help improve services for victims, just like the client I have mentioned. There needs to be more support in placed for those suffering, such as advocates or even more social workers working to assist victims receive services that they may have not known were available to them.

**This act, HB No. 5593 is crucial to assist these victims in need.**

Thank you, Judiciary Committee Chairs and Committee members, for allowing me to provide this testimony in support of this Bill on behalf of many clients that I serve, whom are victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.